



Remarks For

The Hon. Steven C. Preston
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration

Delivered At The

**CHAMPIONS/LENDERS/INTERNATIONAL AWARDS
WINNERS**

Washington, DC

April 23, 2007
6:00 pm

Thank you, Jovita, for the nice introduction.

Welcome back, I hope you have enjoyed today's events. It's good to see you all again. I would like to congratulate our champion award winners personally for your innovative ideas and commitment to small business.

Our champions have overcome obstacles and they are excellent role models for other future small business owners in their respective fields. From our home based champions, Kevin and Julie Gaukel, to our young entrepreneur winners, Jeremy Ames and David Nilssen, these individuals also represent the diversity of small business owners.

I would like to thank our lenders for your agreement to work with the SBA to reach further and harder in extending capital to small businesses. You should be very proud of yourselves and I am proud that you chose our services and programs to help you succeed.

We are a small agency with a very big reach, one that with the partnership of our domestic and international lenders has assisted individuals in starting or expanding their small businesses.

As many of you already know, liquidity is the air to small business. Without capital, you can't get started, you can't expand, and you can't weather tough times. With the help of our lenders, the SBA closed out a

record year in Fiscal Year 2006 and continued to build upon a strong record of accomplishment, providing more than twice as many loans to small businesses as it did just five years earlier.

The combined number of loans approved for the 7(a) and 504 primary loan programs of 107,233 is a record. All told, the SBA approved over \$23 billion in loans and venture capital financing for more than 111,000 small businesses in FY 2006.

A third of all SBA-approved loans in Fiscal Year 2006 went to minority borrowers –almost 35,000 minority-owned small businesses received over \$6 billion. SBA also approved 23,450 loans worth \$3.44 billion to women-owned businesses, the second largest one-year totals ever.

The number of loans approved for African Americans, Hispanics and Asian Americans rose to record levels, with large increased in each group.

I would also like to recognize our international lenders. Trade enables producers of goods and services to move beyond the U.S. market of 300 million people to the world market of 6.2 billion. More than 95 percent of the world's population and two-thirds of the world's purchasing power is located outside of the United States, and more than 25 percent of our economy's growth comes from trade.

Well over 200,000 small businesses are selling more than \$300 billion per year of goods and services in foreign markets, and since 2001, SBA's loans to exporters have increased 500 percent. There are important opportunities for small businesses outside of our borders, and we are helping them access those markets.

The SBA's Surety Bond Guarantee Program backed over 5,200 bonds on behalf of small businesses. Of those bonds, 30 percent were for competitive opportunity gaps firms. SBA's bond guarantee assistance resulted in \$529 million in contract revenue to participating small businesses.

I thank all of you champions, personally, for putting your talents, your time, and your passions into serving the entrepreneurs of America.

Tom Sullivan Introduction

At this time, I would like to introduce a colleague of mine and a passionate advocate for small business. Tom Sullivan, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy heads the Office of Advocacy which was created by Congress in 1976 to serve as a watchdog for small business within the federal government.

Through the Office of Advocacy, the SBA helps to protect small business from harmful new government regulations --it makes sure small business

has a voice, so their needs, concerns, issues, and priorities are not lost in the big-business dominated lobbying environment of Washington.

As Chief Counsel, Tom leads a team of attorneys and economists who work to remove regulatory barriers to entrepreneurial growth, conduct economic research, and publish data on small businesses' contributions to the economy.

Sullivan previously served as the Executive Director of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) Legal Foundation, which provides guidance on legal issues to small businesses and promotes a pro small business agenda in the nation's courts.

He was named by Fortune Small Business magazine as one of the "Power 30 most influential people in Washington" in September 2000, he was described as "an affable lawyer...respected by regulators for his well researched positions on issues affecting small business." Inc. magazine named Sullivan, "an entrepreneur's best friend in Washington, DC" last year.

It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you Chief Counsel for Advocacy, Tom Sullivan.